United Nations A/54/916–S/2000/577

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
15 June 2000
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda items 43, 44, 56, 73 and 79

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 13 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventy-fifth regular session, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 3 June 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 43, 44, 56, 73 and 79, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fawzi Bin Abdul Majeed **Shobokshi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-48290 (E) 200600 200600

Annex to the letter dated 13 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventy-fifth session, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 3 June 2000

On Saturday, 3 June 2000, the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its seventy-fifth regular session in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the chairmanship of His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia and Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim Al-Hujeilan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council reviewed the results of the meetings held by a number of ministerial committees for the purpose of promoting joint action as well as the developments that had taken place with respect to political issues at the regional, inter-Arab and international levels.

Cooperation

In connection with economic matters, the Council was informed of the results of the fifth Meeting of Ministers for Municipal Affairs and the fifty-second meeting of the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation and of the recommendations they had made for the advancement of cooperation in their respective fields.

In the context of the progress made by the GCC States in establishing close economic relations with international economic groupings, the Ministerial Council welcomed the signing in May 2000 of a Declaration of Principles on cooperation between the GCC States and the States members of the European Free Trade Area and expressed the hope that the declaration would mark the beginning of successful cooperation between the two parties.

In the field of matters affecting man and the environment, the Ministerial Council reviewed the results of the meetings held by a number of ministerial committees, namely those concerned with the expansion of cooperation in the areas

of higher education, scientific research, the civil service, health, Red Crescent societies and the protection of the marine environment in member States.

The Ministerial Council was also informed of the results of the meetings held by a number of committees concerned with the promotion of military cooperation between member States, and it expressed satisfaction at the results achieved by the relevant committees in this regard.

Political issues

The Ministerial Council discussed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to the consequences of its aggression against Kuwait. It noted once again that Iraq was still temporizing and was evading compliance with fundamental aspects of the relevant Security Council resolutions. It again expressed regret that the Iraqi regime was persisting in ignoring resolutions that have the force of international law, in defying the will of the international community and in rejecting inter-Arab and international initiatives for the creation of an acceptable and effective mechanism or schedule, within the framework of cooperation with the United Nations, for the lifting of the international economic embargo being maintained against Iraq and ending the suffering of the Iraqi people. The Council called upon the Iraqi Government to demonstrate its good faith, in both word and deed, to refrain from any act of provocation or aggression against Kuwait and its other neighbours in compliance with Security Council resolution 949 (1994), to desist from carrying out any acts of sabotage through the agency of elements seeking to undermine the security and stability of Kuwait, and to acknowledge that its invasion of Kuwait had been in violation of the relevant pan-Arab and international covenants. The Council once again urged the Government of Iraq to comply expeditiously with Security Council resolution 1284 (1999) and to cooperate with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission established thereby and with the other international arrangements for the release of Kuwaiti and Saudi prisoners and hostages and the return of Kuwaiti property.

The Council further welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1293 (2000), by which the allocation for the repair of Iraqi oil installations is increased from $600 million to $1.2 billion.

In the same context, the Ministerial Council again welcomed all resolutions and initiatives that might contribute to mitigating the suffering of the Iraqi people, suffering for whose origin and perpetuation the Iraqi regime must bear full responsibility. The Council expressed the hope that Iraq would without delay take practical and genuine steps to give clear expression to its commitment to the relevant resolutions and to the requirements for security and stability in the region so as to demonstrate its seriousness by responding to the efforts made at the Arab and international levels to mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people and restore Iraq to its place in the international community.

The Council reaffirmed its well-known and well-established positions with respect to the need to maintain the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The Council heard a presentation from His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, concerning ideas for

mitigating the human suffering of the Iraqi people. These ideas will be incorporated in a paper to be sent to member States in order to elicit comments and proposals in their regard.

The Ministerial Council reviewed relations with Iran and the efforts being made by the Committee of Three. It recalled the basic principles approved by the Supreme Council and the approach adopted by the GCC States in their relations with Iran, based as they are on the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the affairs of others, rejection of the threat or use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and regard for mutual interests. It also recalled the instructions given by the Supreme Council at its second consultative meeting, held in Muscat on 29 April 2000, that the Ministerial Committee of Three should continue its efforts to devise a mechanism for direct negotiations between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the dispute concerning the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. The Ministerial Council expressed the hope that the Iranian Government would respond to the worthy purpose for which the Committee had been established.

The Council considered developments in the peace process in the Middle East, and it noted with regret the breakdown in negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli and Syrian-Israeli tracks, which had again brought the peace process to a situation of deadlock.

In this context, the Council again expressed its conviction that the only explanation for the breakdown in the peace process on all tracks was the maintenance by Israel of unjustifiable positions and its failure to meet the requirements of the process while the Arab side was pursuing its commitment to peace as an irreversible strategic option. The Ministerial Council renewed its demand that influential parties, and in particular the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as well as the European Union and its member States, should take action and make greater efforts to urge the Israelis to return to the principles endorsed by the Madrid Peace Conference so that legitimate Arab rights could be restored in implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and the principle of land for peace.

The Ministerial Council reaffirmed its well-established position that a comprehensive and just peace can only be achieved with the attainment by the Palestinian people of all its legitimate rights, including the right of the Palestine refugees to return in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and the right to establish an independent State on its national soil with Jerusalem as its capital. The Council reaffirmed its full support for the position adopted by the State of Palestine that rejects any attempts on the part of the Israeli Government to alter the demographic composition or geographical character of the occupied territories and regards such actions as being in violation of the provisions of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. It also stressed that a comprehensive peace can only be achieved with a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Arab Golan to the boundary line as it existed on 4 June 1967.

The Ministerial Council conveyed its sincere congratulations to the President, Government and people of Lebanon on the restoration of the country's sovereignty over its liberated territories and on the evacuation of the Israeli occupation forces from southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa. It called upon Israel to complete its

withdrawal from all Lebanese territory in accordance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). The Council stressed that it was essential that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should perform the security functions assigned to it in southern Lebanon under resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) in order to prevent Israel from finding pretexts to hold Lebanon and Syria responsible for any security incidents that might occur and might jeopardize security, peace and stability in the region.

The Ministerial Council looks forward to the forthcoming meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Damascus Declaration countries, to be held on 5 June 2000 in Egypt, as an important contribution to joint Arab action.

The Ministerial Council gave its full endorsement to the statement adopted at the meeting held in Tadmur (Palmyra), Syrian Arab Republic, on 3 and 4 May 2000 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic in support of the performance by UNIFIL of the security functions assigned to it under resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

The Council once more called upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council again affirmed that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all of its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

The Ministerial Council followed with great concern the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and it urged them to do all in their power to spare the two countries the calamity of further warfare and killing. The Council hopes that Ethiopia's announcement of a halt to military operations will be helpful in reaching agreement to end the conflict.